



**For Immediate Release
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**Contact: Vanessa Gulati
617-626-1119**

STATE AND PARTNERS PLANT GREEN ROOF IN IPSWICH

This week, an unusual roof covering was installed at the Whipple School Annex in Ipswich. The building, located next to Town Hall, is being refurbished by the North Shore Housing Trust into ten affordable housing units for senior citizens, and it will have a “green roof.” That is, the roof will be covered with a special soil system and planted with a variety of sedums, which are hardy groundcover plants with succulent, water-storing leaves. The green roof was incorporated into the redevelopment project as a demonstration, in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), using grant funds DCR received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The green roof, a feature popular in Germany and growing in popularity in the United States and other countries, is designed to reduce the volume of stormwater that runs off rooftops and improve the quality of any water that does run off. The soil and plants absorb and store rainwater, and the plant roots filter and remove pollutants. Additional benefits of the green roof include thermal insulation, decreasing heating and cooling costs, and protecting the roof’s rubber membrane from UV radiation, abrasion, and other weather elements, thereby increasing the life of the membrane by possibly as much as 300%.

“The Whipple School Annex is an ideal location for a green roof,” said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. “Not only will this system address water quality, which is particularly important in a building located immediately adjacent to the Ipswich River, but combining the project with affordable senior housing is an excellent example of smart growth.”

Almost the entire roof, about 3,000 square feet, will be covered with plants, explained the project’s architect, Ken Savoie of K.J. Savoie Architecture. The green roof consists of layers, starting with the waterproof membrane. This membrane is then covered with a protective fabric, a water-storing drainage mat, a root barrier material, three inches of lightweight soil, and finally the plants. The system will be supplied and installed by Magco, Inc. of Maryland.

Once the plants are established, DCR’s scientific partner, the U.S. Geological Survey, will collect samples of roof runoff to determine how effective the green roof is in reducing runoff volume and removing pollutants.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Mitt Romney
Governor

Kerry Healey
Lt. Governor

Robert W. Gollidge, Jr., Secretary
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Stephen H. Burrington, Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

Construction on the Whipple Annex began in May and is expected to be completed by this coming winter, according to Jennifer M. Raitt, executive director of the Trust. The drought-tolerant plants on the green roof, which were installed this week, are expected to be nearly fully established by next summer and should eventually become hardy enough to require little to no maintenance.

The green roof project, with a price ticket of \$110,000 is one of nine demonstration projects sponsored under the \$1 million Targeted Watersheds grant that DCR received from the EPA. All the demonstration projects are designed to improve conditions in the Ipswich River watershed.

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